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ABSTRACT

This issue of the "Goldfinch" focuses on the Iowa state fair. The magazine begins with a map of the fair as it looks today. The article explains that the first Iowa state fair was held in 1854. After traveling from town to town for several years, the fair settled in the capital city of Des Moines in 1878. Eight years later, in 1886, the first fair was held on the fairgrounds that are now its permanent home. An article on 4-H clubs and programs describes 4-H projects that have won awards at the fair. A section on state fair news discusses fair food, the first Iowa state fair female equestrians, butter sculptress, and other fair entertainments. Another article details the history of the state fair, and explains how the fair has changed since it first began. Learning activities include instructions for making a butter sculpture, an exercise in which students identify buildings at the fairgrounds by matching the name of each building with its drawing using the clues provided, a fill in the blanks activity on a fair theme, a funnel cake maze, and a cartoon. Other articles describe the history of the Youth Inn at the fairgrounds and how camping at the fair has changed. An excerpt from a the book "State Fair' by an Iowa author is included. Information on a state fair writing contest for fifth graders is detailed as well as instructions for doing an oral history. (DK)

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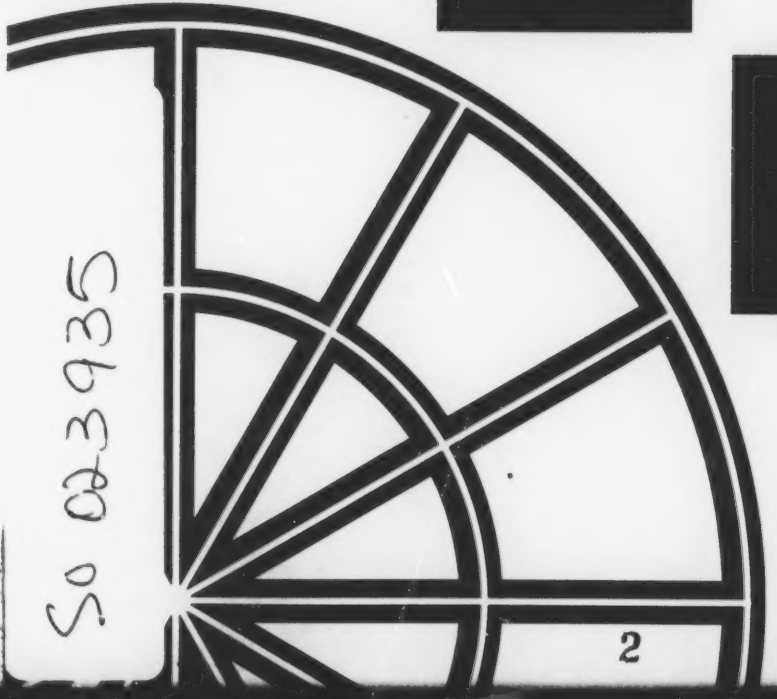
THE Goldfinch

Iowa History for Young People

Volume 15, Number 3 Spring 1994

ED 370 864

IOWA STATE FAIR



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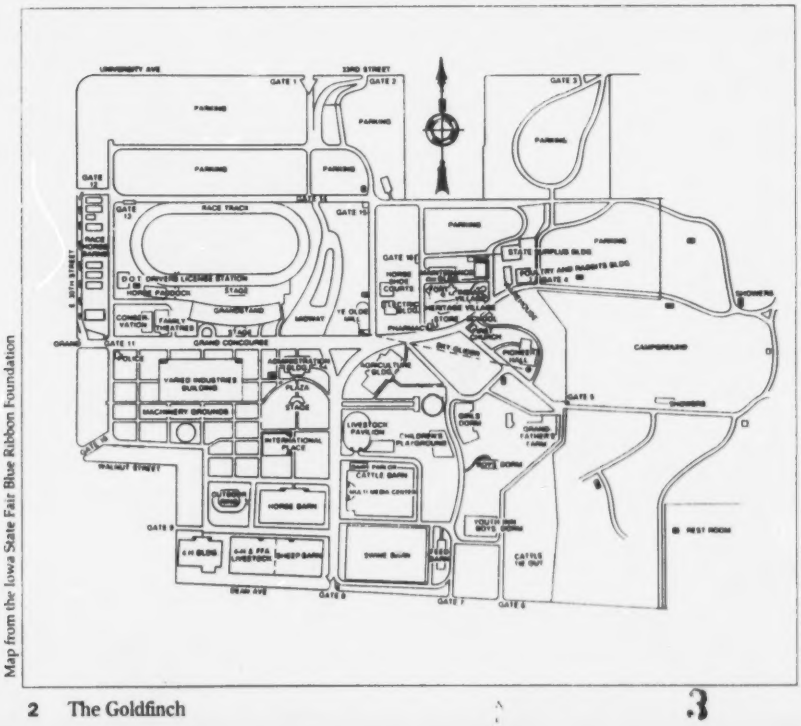
Wild Rosie's Map

Six years before Abraham Lincoln became the president of the United States, the first Iowa State Fair was held in 1854. After traveling from town to town for several years, the fair settled in the capital city of Des Moines in 1878. Eight years later, in 1886, the first fair was held on what is now its permanent home—a beautiful chunk of land on the east side of the city.

Here is a map of the Iowa State Fair as it looks today. See if you can locate the buildings mentioned in the article on page 26. Turn to page 30 for the answers.



Map from the Iowa State Fair Blue Ribbon Foundation

The Goldfinch

Parent's Choice Award Winner

Volume 15, Number 3
Spring 1994

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4-H Takes Kids to State Fairs—and Beyond

by Millie K. Frese

4-H'ers Jill Sadler (L) and Jeni Nathan (R), both 13, have won awards for their educational presentations at the last two State Fairs.

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On the Cover (L to R):
Dale Bucks, 12, of Davenport, with his champion baby beef, "Kentucky Gold"; Enjoying a midway ride in 1962; Sharing "floss candy" in 1939; Betty Trenary, 16, of Pocahontas with her champion Shorthorn baby beef, "Dogwood Junior," 1956; Mark Muxfeldt, 9, of Story City, reflects the Fair in his cool shades, 1993; Enjoying fair treats on Children's Day, 1950; Two-year-old Max Oz of Plymouth with a prize-winning pumpkin, 1993.

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The roads connecting Cedar Rapids and the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines represent more than long stretches of pavement for two Cedar Rapids 4-H'ers. For Jill Sadler and Jeni Nathan, both 13, two successive trips to the Iowa State Fair are the products of good ideas, thorough research, and lots of practice. Jill and Jeni earned the right in both 1992 and 1993 to take their shows on the road by first winning top ratings at the county fair level of competition, then being selected to represent Linn County at the State Fair.

Their "shows" were Educational Presentations—a division of competition in 4-H where individuals or teams of two select topics, then demonstrate them for a judge and an audience. Jill and Jeni also incorporated posters, songs, and dance in their presentations.

"We tied it in with Disney's 'Beauty and the Beast' movie," Jeni explained, "during the song where they are doing all these things with silverware and plates. Our demonstration was based on table settings. . . ."

"And table manners," Jill added. "We demonstrated the proper way to set a table and way to act."

Researching, writing, choreographing, and performing an educational presentation "took a lot of ideas," Jill told *The Goldfinch*. They wrote and rewrote their script, honing it until they had approximately 15 minutes of material.

"We opened with a song," Jeni continued. "It captured everyone's attention, and they really wanted to listen."

Practice, practice, practice

Jill said they "went over and over" their presentations before the county fair. Jill's mom, Linda Sadler, videotaped some rehearsals so the girls could see what worked and what didn't.

For the Sadlers and the Nathans, the State Fair is not just serious business — it's a family affair!

Mike R. Frese

"We were surprised—and excited" to be chosen to represent Linn County at the State Fair, Jill said. "It can be nervewracking, but doing presentations with a friend helps ease the pressure."

Anticipation mounted on the day of their State Fair performance when, before dawn, they loaded a car with all of their supplies and watched the sun rise during the 2 1/2 hour trip to Des Moines.

Their audience at the State Fair was 20-25 people, including their families, who came to cheer them on. Both trips to the State Fair earned them Seals of Excellence—the highest award presented.

"The second time was easier because we knew what to expect," Jeni said. Their 1993 presentation,

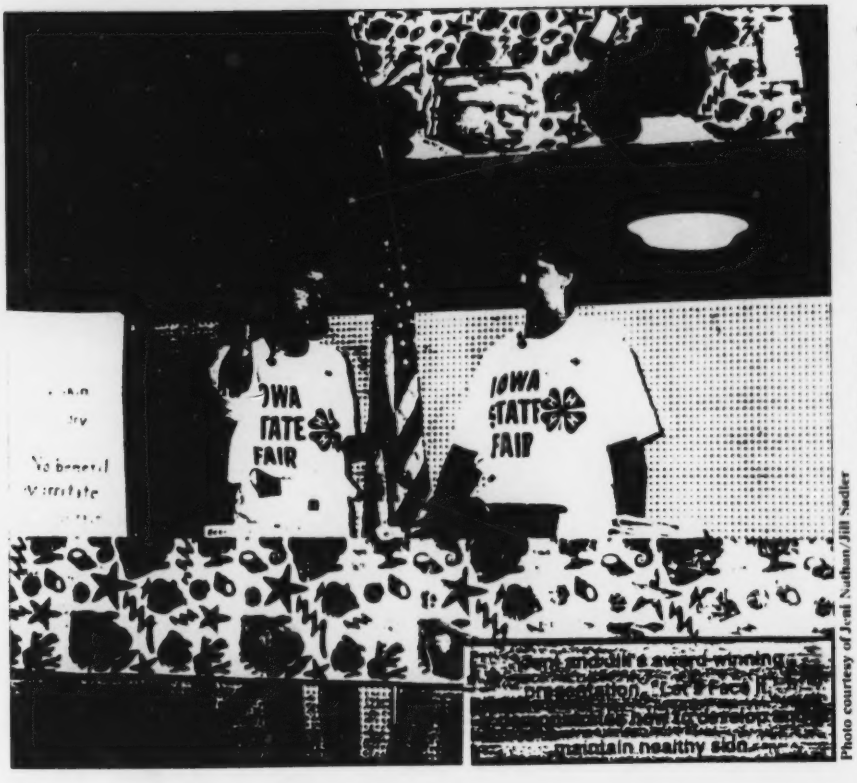


Photo courtesy of Jeni Nathan/Jill Sadler

called "Let's Face It" taught how to develop and maintain healthy skin.

When the pressure was off and judging completed, Jill, Jeni, and their families spent the rest of the day enjoying the fair.

"We saw replicas of the Capitol and the White House made out of Legos, a butter cow and bungee jumpers," Jill said. "And we ate cotton candy, corn dogs, lemonade, and funnel cakes—all the stuff your mom doesn't want you to eat."

Jill and Jeni are in their fourth year in 4-H. Both credit their mothers—and each other—with the decision to join. They now belong to a club of 18 members (14 girls and 4 boys) called the "Marionettes." In fact, both girls come from families whose roots are deeply embedded in 4-H.

Linda Sadler, Jill's mom, belonged to the College Chickadees for seven year. She grew up on a farm south of Cedar Rapids.

"When I was in 4-H, we were required to do a presentation for the local contest," Linda remembered. "Two presentations were chosen from each club (at local contests) to go on to the county fair. Competition was stiff then because everyone wanted to do it!"

Sadler's presentation topics included demonstrating different ways to prepare eggs ("I was so nervous I missed the bowl once!"), making cushion covers, and refinishing furniture.

In another presentation, she showed how to construct tote bags. She also exhibited other projects at the Linn County Fair, including matting and framing a print. That exhibit went to the State Fair. It hangs in her own living room today, with entry tags still stuck to the back.

Today, as leader of the Marionettes, Sadler's goal is to make 4-H an interesting, hands-on, creative experi-

ence club members will enjoy. "And," she adds, "it's fun to take my daughter to the same fair I went to as a 4H-er!"

Linda's mother and Jill's grandmother, Marjorie Jansa, grew up in Benton County. She spent eight years in the 1940's as a 4-H member. "Five years in a girls' club and three years in a boys' club," Marjorie said. "In those days girls had to belong to a girls' club to join a boys' club, and you had to be in a boys' club if you wanted to show calves," she explained.

Grandmother Jansa did her share of educational presentations, too. Her topics included how to reverse used window shades and how to clean carpets.

"We used to make things out of nothing for 4-H exhibits," Marjorie remembered. She made a vanity for her bedroom by putting a board across two wooden orange crates. She painted the top, then gathered a skirt she made of gold fabric around it to hide the crates.

Jill noted that today, "made-from-nothing" projects have their own entry class at the fair. It's called "recycled."

Nebraska 4-H

Jeni's mom, Kathy Nathan, is also no stranger to 4-H. She spent eight years as a member of the Belle Livewires 4-H club in Nebraska.

"Kids took more projects to the fair then than they do now," Kathy observed. "County fair week was a big deal!" Kathy recalled staying up nights before the county fair finishing entries and filling a freezer with sponge cakes hoping that one might earn a blue ribbon.

Nathan remembers going to 4-H meetings where the whole family came. "Meetings were a real social event," she said. "Parents would visit while kids had project meetings. Whole families were involved." Now, she thinks asking for that depth of participation might be unrealistic as more mothers work outside the home, and more activities compete for kids' time and attention.

"In 4-H, kids learn how to set a goal and work toward it," Kathy said. She says that the actual projects are not as important as what kids learn by doing them.

Jill's younger sister, Emily, 11, and Jeni's younger sister, Stefanie, 10, are in their first year of 4-H. They're both setting goals, signing up for projects, and thinking about doing an educational presentation together.

Jill's brother, Roy, hasn't joined 4-H—yet. Now eight years old, he'll become the family's newest 4-H member when he joins next year.

Whether or not 4-H projects take them on the road that leads to the State Fair again this year, what they've already learned there will stay with them for a lifetime. Jill and Jeni agreed they've been challenged by other exhibits. They've gained experience in public speaking that will help them in the future, and most importantly, Jill said, they've had fun.

Millie Frese was a member of the Classie Lassies 4-H club in Delaware County for nine years. She remembers summers devoted to finishing projects for the fair, many of which went on to compete at the State Fair. She still enjoys trips to the State Fair to work in a food stand, look at exhibits, and eat corn dogs and funnel cakes!

FAIR NEWS

GIDDY UP!

MUNCH ON!

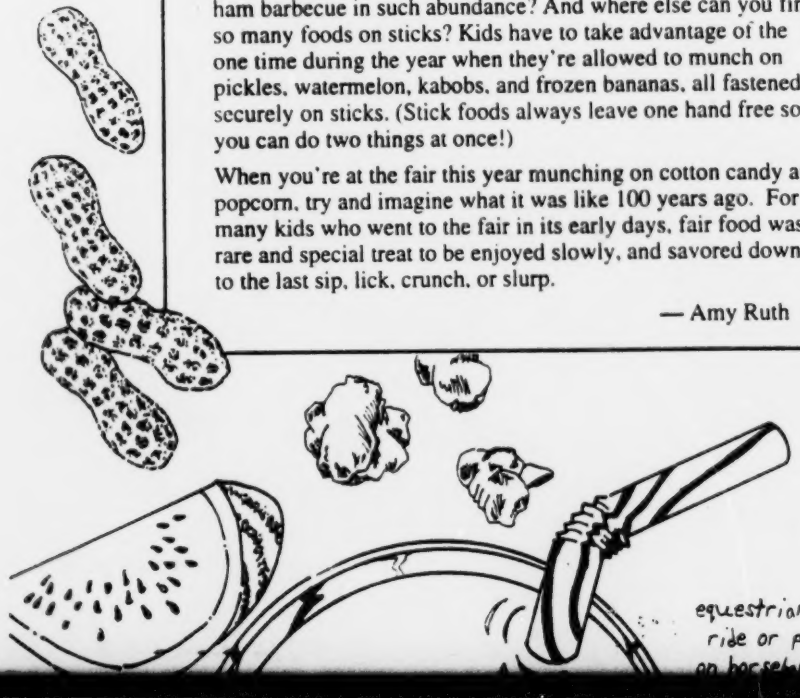
DES MOINES—It's the same every year: corn dogs, cotton candy, pink lemonade, warm popcorn, roasted peanuts, ice cream cones, and shiny caramel apples that make dentists cringe.

Do you ever get tired of it?

Kids love fair foods, and often eat too much of it! But where else can you find hot dogs, spicy French fries, funnel cakes, and ham barbecue in such abundance? And where else can you find so many foods on sticks? Kids have to take advantage of the one time during the year when they're allowed to munch on pickles, watermelon, kabobs, and frozen bananas, all fastened securely on sticks. (Stick foods always leave one hand free so you can do two things at once!)

When you're at the fair this year munching on cotton candy and popcorn, try and imagine what it was like 100 years ago. For many kids who went to the fair in its early days, fair food was a rare and special treat to be enjoyed slowly, and savored down to the last sip, lick, crunch, or slurp.

— Amy Ruth



FAIRFIELD—They were graceful and skillful. They wore riding dresses and colorful bows. They were young ladies on horses. They were the first Iowa state fair **equestrians** (pronounced i-KWES-tre-ens.)

On October 26, 1854, 10 young ladies entertained the first Iowa State Fair goers. Each rider wore a long **riding habit**, a hat with feathers, and a brightly colored ribbon. To show her riding skill and style, each young lady rode her horse around the show ring at many different speeds. The audience cheered wildly.

During the next day's show, the rider who was boldest, most skillful, and graceful would win a gold watch from Fair President Colonel Clagett. Judges noted each young lady's appearance and control over her horse.

The judges described some riders as being poorly seated on their horses. Others were skillful with the horse reins. The judges praised the winning rider, Miss Turner of Lee County, for her, "elegant form, fine face and soft, blue eyes." But the audience

equestrians: people who ride or perform on horseback

riding habit: an outfit worn by a horseback ride

The Story of the State Fair's Girl Riders

was not pleased with the judges' choice. Some believed she won not because she was the best rider, but because she was a relative of the fair president. The audience wanted another rider to win the prize.

A 13-year-old rider from Johnson County, Miss Hodges, was favored by the crowd. Her daring performance thrilled them. To reward Miss Hodges, the crowd passed around a hat and collected $165. She was also given free tuition for three terms at a school in Fairfield and a one-term scholarship to the Mount Pleasant Academy.

Critics of women riders

Not everyone at the fair was pleased with the riding show. Some felt women would lose their charm and gentleness by practicing such a rough sport. Others said women should be more concerned with raising families and keeping up their home, not riding horses. The Fair Board defended the show, saying the young ladies were learning a useful skill which taught them to be "graceful and charming."

The Equestrian Show continued to be a major event at the Iowa State Fair for many years. Fair records show women riders entertained almost every year until 1879. Horses and their riders are still an admired part of today's Iowa State Fair.

—Sherri Dagel

People IN THE NEWS

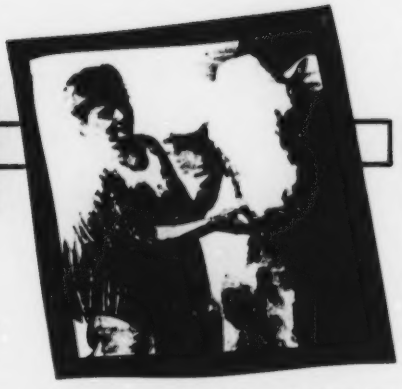
Mr. State Fair Bill Riley

State Fair legend Bill Riley is committed to working with Iowa's talented youngsters at the State Fair. Here he shares an award-winning moment with 1993 Talent Sprout, Kerri Aluine.

Iowa State Fair

Art by Mary Moye-Rowley

People IN THE NEWS



"Duffy" Lyon Butter Sculptor

TOLEDO, IOWA—How Many Pounds of Butter in a Butter Cow?

"About 500 pounds," Norma Duffield Lyon, a butter sculptor, would answer. "Duffy", as Norma is called, has created more than 100 cows and other sculptures out of butter since the 1960 Iowa State Fair.

Although most of her sculptures are of cows, Duffy makes other animals, too. She has sculpted horses, cows, lambs, a donkey, an elephant, pigs, sheep, a cowboy, and human figures. She creates each sculpture so it is different from the last, varying the breed or other characteristics.

To make the butter sculptures, Lyon wears several layers of clothes and works inside a 42-degree showcase. Each sculpture takes between 12 to 16 hours to build. Although she uses a few tools to create wrinkles, eyes and ears, her best tools are her hands.

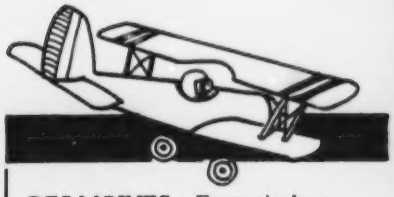
Lyon found her inspiration for making butter sculptures at home, on her farm near Toledo, Iowa. She is proud to say she is from Iowa. She was originally from Knoxville, Tennessee, but after attending Iowa State University, she made Iowa her permanent home.

Duffy and her husband, Joe, are dairy farmers. They have raised nine children and several 100-head herds of cows. Over the years, many of their children have accompanied Duffy to state fairs as butter-sculptor helpers or as fair contest competitors.

The fair isn't the only place Lyon creates her spreadable masterpieces. The artist has been a guest at dairy congresses, livestock shows, restaurants and grocery conventions. She has traveled around the United States and Canada. She has even appeared on television and in *Life* magazine.

To honor Duffy, a local art council dedicated to her a bronze sculpture of a cow and newborn calf. Duffy even helped to create the sculpture.

—Sherri Dagel



DES MOINES—From airplane weddings and wing walkers to cow-chip throwing and chicken-calling contests, the Iowa State Fair has had its share of wacky, off-the-wall and sometimes outrageous entertainment .

And Iowans love every minute of it.

On August 27, 1928, thousands of fairgoers gathered expectantly around the grandstand, their faces tilted to the sky, as Thressa Brown, Myron Millhollin, and their wedding party boarded an airplane at the Des Moines airport. When the plane swooped down over the fairgrounds, the crowd cheered, and the minister wed Thressa and Myron as the first couple ever to be married on an airplane in Iowa. (Or should we say, above Iowa!)

This was just one of many thrill shows that captured the attention of thousands of Iowans that year. In the fair's earlier days, crowds rooted and applauded as hot-air balloons floated and bobbed above them carrying excited fairgoers in swaying baskets.

When airplanes and cars became popular, daredevils would zig-zag their planes in and out of the clouds, race their cars around and around in circles, or walk on wings of air-borne planes.

As people and technology became more sophisticated, so did the thrill shows. In 1937, Captain F.F. Frakes

ZANY ENTERTAINMENT

Sumo wrestler Josh Horman (left) of Wheatland, stood firm against his opponent at the 1993 State Fair.

Iowa State Fair

Iowa State Fair

Daring race car drivers also entertain at the State Fair.

crashed an airplane into a house on the fairgrounds in front of 62,000 spectators. Miraculously, he was unharmed.

Entertainment at the fair doesn't have to be dangerous to be wacky. Consider the fast-finger knitting contest, the rooster crowing, and turkey and duck calling contests. Don't forget the kid's ugliest cake contest and the cow-chip throwing contest.

Last year, Wes Stenhoek of Prairie City won the youth cow-chip throwing contest. The year before, the honor went to 12-year-old Jerome Ewing who threw his winning cow chip 126 feet, just 55 feet, nine inches shy of the world's record cow-chip throw.

If you can think wacky, then you can think big — really big. Giant-sized vegetables, fruits and even animals also have a place at the fair.

Perhaps the tradition began 140 years ago when Governor James W. Grimes was presented with a 360-pound Denmark Cheese on the first day of the first Iowa State Fair.

One hundred and thirty-eight years later, in 1992, a 412-pound monster squash and a 2.722-pound tomato caught the playful eye of fairgoers, young and old.

Last year, eight-year-old Bambi Thomas of Des Moines and her 14-and-a-half-pound Flemish Giant rabbit, Harvey, won the Biggest Bunny contest. A champion pumpkin weighed in at 270-and-a-half pounds. Someone's sure to get a lot of pies out of that!

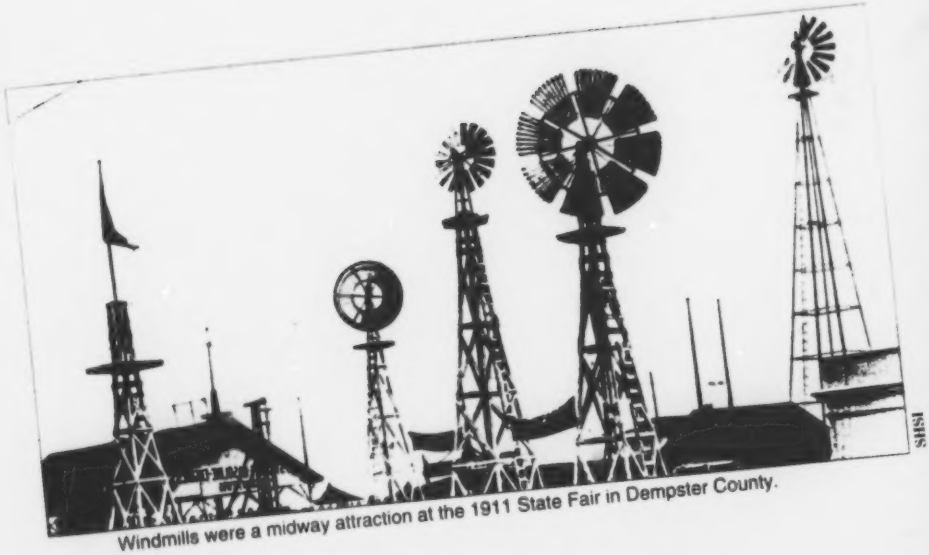
If you think giant veggies and bunnies are wild, consider this: in the late 1920s and 30s 25,000 Iowa kids *owned* a baby elephant. The Iowa State Fair Board and the *Des Moines Register and Tribune* encouraged kids to send their dimes to the *Register* to buy a baby elephant for the fair. By fair time, kids (and some adults) had sent in enough change to buy a 500-pound, $3000 elephant who was shipped to Iowa from Germany. The new owners decided to call their pet, "Baby Mine," and all 25,000 proud kids met the baby elephant for the first time at the fairgrounds.

For the next 13 years, Baby Mine toured the state with fair worker Elwood Emery, visiting schools and taking kids for rides. By the time she was a teenager, Baby Mine weighed 4,000 pounds and became too big and expensive for the fair to keep. Baby Mine spent the next 11 to 12 years of her life (no one's exactly sure when or how she died) in the circus, performing under the stage name, "Katie."

—Amy Ruth

Iowa's State Fair

C'mon In!
Blast to the Past!
See How the State Fair Has Changed



Windmills were a midway attraction at the 1911 State Fair in Dempster County. SHSI

One morning in late August 1911, nine-year-old Ted Ehlers slid his silver dollar carefully into the turnstile, rotated the bar, and stepped into the Iowa State Fair for the first time.

Ted and his father walked all over the fair that day, until Ted's legs were so tired, they ached. The two explored the livestock pavilions where Ted saw chickens, geese, and rabbits he had never seen on the family farm in Tama. He ate fair food under a tent, and after dinner gazed into the sky above the grandstand, watching the exploding tracks of fireworks with eager eyes.

"It was quite a thrill for a country boy," Ted wrote 66 years later in a statewide writing contest. "The rockets were frightening with their loud noise, and the **roman candles** looked like they would fall on you."

By the time Ted Ehlers had made his first visit, the Iowa State Fair had existed for almost 60 years, and had already experienced many changes.

In October of 1854, Iowans at the first state fair in Fairfield tromped around six acres of fairgrounds taking in the sites and sounds of a simple three-day celebration of Iowa agriculture. Early fairs were almost exclusively agricultural events.

Brave fairgoers rode the daring double Ferris wheel in 1962. SHSI

The Fairfield fairgrounds were simple and enclosed by a ten foot, wooden fence. Stalls and pens were constructed for livestock exhibits. Between 7,000 and 8,000 people paid 25

roman candles – fireworks in cardboard tubes that shoot out sparks

cents a day to attend the first fair.

Today, the fairgrounds in Des Moines sit on almost 400 acres that include a 160-acre campground and 5,000 parking spaces. Modern fairgoers walk through some of the same buildings Ted Ehlers visited in 1911.

In 1993, 893,944 people attended the fair and enjoyed the bustling midway, exciting Grandstand entertainment, and long stretches of exhibits ranging from swine to sweet corn. To make sure everyone gets where they're going, shuttle buses and golf carts run between the parking lots, the campground, and fair entrances.

Albert Frencher and Rosemary Moore discovered that fair animals come in all shapes and sizes.

Iowa State Fair

Fairgoers

Fairs were not new to Iowans in 1854. They had been attending county fairs since before Iowa became a state in 1846. The Iowa State Fair grew out of one of the state's earliest county fairs.

One hundred and forty years ago, Iowa's population was mostly rural and many families farmed for a living. The fair was a place for Iowans to display their farm products, meet with friends and neighbors (farm life without cars or telephones could be very lonely), and learn about new farming techniques.

At the first state fair, farmers showed cattle, hogs, sheep, geese, and chickens in addition to wheat and corn. Some of the exhibits included a display of preserved snakes and lizards, farm **implements**, and artificial teeth.

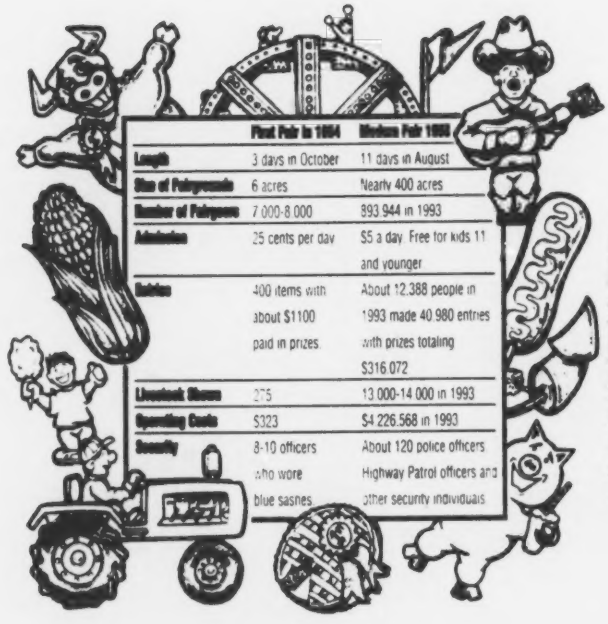
About 400 items competed that year for $1100 in prize money. Today, fairgoers can expect to compete with more than 12,000 people and at least 40,000 entries. In 1992, fairgoers won a total of $321,836 in prize money for their entries.

The early years of the fair were almost experiments to see what worked and what didn't. Visitors to the first fair spent almost $50 in counterfeit money, and the fair didn't make a profit. At the second fair, almost 100 visitors used the same admission ticket, slipping it back over the fence so others could enter the fair without paying. The ticket was used until it wore out. The next year, organizers adopted a reliable ticket system.

As Iowa became more urban, the state fair attracted curious city folk who enjoyed learning about a way of life so different from their own. The fair became a social event with daring thrill shows, fireworks, and Midway rides to keep the interest of Iowa's urban fairgoers.

Long-distance travel across Iowa in 1854 was difficult. It would be four years until the railroad reached Fairfield. Instead, fairgoers walked, drove

implements – tools or equipment used for work.



Design by Art A La Carte Ltd., Newton

wagons and carts, or rode animals to the first Iowa State Fair. Because it was difficult to transport goods to be exhibited, the number of farm products entered in early fairs was small.

For the next 24 years, the fair was held throughout the state so that all Iowans would have the opportunity to visit the fair without always having to travel long distances. The fair moved to Des Moines in 1879 and has been at its present location since 1886.

The rapidly expanding railroads brought smoother travel. After the 1860s the fair could easily be reached by train and fairgoers often traveled at discounted prices. Sometimes, the goods they brought with them to exhibit rode for no charge. Better roads across the state made it possible for more and more people to drive to the fair, and it grew quickly.

Today, people come from all over the country and around the world. They travel in cars, trucks, and campers, on bicycles and motorcycles, and by buses, trains, and airplanes.

Today's fair

Although the fair still promotes agriculture in Iowa, many Iowans don't know as much about agriculture as they used to.

"Agriculture is so foreign to so many people," R. Douglas Hurt, a professor of agricultural history at Iowa State University in Ames, told *The Goldfinch*. "A century ago that wouldn't have been so. The links to the farm, either through parents or others, would have been close enough so that the agricultural experience would have been very meaningful."

Today, many Iowa kids who grow up in cities know little about farm animals or farm life. They go to the state fair to learn.

"Farm people are different. They're out there in the open, and they're as close to you as the next mouthful of food," Don Muhm, former farm editor of *The Des Moines Register*, told *The Goldfinch*.

City kids take guided tours through livestock areas and see what farm kids see every day — baby pigs being born, sheep being shorn, and baby chicks hatching out of their eggs. Kids at the fair might catch a glimpse of the more exotic farm animals like llamas and ostriches.

Kids also can learn about changes in animals. Many of these breeding changes can be best seen in cattle and pigs, said Richard Willham, professor of animal science at Iowa State University. Both animals have

concessionaires – people who own or work in booths that sell refreshments.

been bred to be bigger, more muscular and leaner, he told *The Goldfinch*.

One thing that never changes is the love of animals, their owners, and fairgoers. At the fair, animals compete against each other not only for blue ribbons, but for the love and attention of the crowds.

Electricity came to the fair around 1915 and brought many changes. In the early days of electrical power, electricity was only available at the fair from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. During this time, the fair generated its own power from transformers purchased from Fort Dodge.

Today, **concessionaires** and exhibitors need to plug in electric lights, games, ovens, and refrigerators. Electric fans chase away the heat and the flies. Many fair performers plug in instruments, amplifiers, and stage props.

The State Fair serves up all sorts of prizes — like this woman's award-winning bread in 1947.

Getting a good grip is the key to enjoying a midway ride.

Floyd Deets of Des Moines was superintendent of buildings and grounds at the fair from 1960 to 1984, taking the job over from his father who held the position from 1921 to 1960. Floyd practically grew up on the fairgrounds. He remembers a time when the light glow of **Aladdin lamps** hadn't yet given way to the hum of electricity; a time when concession stands were simple tents with sawdust floors.

"It was something they could set up in a hurry and take down that night," Floyd told *The Goldfinch*. "Now it's all permanent."

The fair as we know it today has changed a lot since 1854. But it still brings Iowans together to mingle with neighbors and friends and learn about Iowa's heritage, much like it did when the first fairgoers paid a quarter and walked through the simple gates in Fairfield so many years ago.

—Amy Ruth

Aladdin lamps – lights powered by white gas.

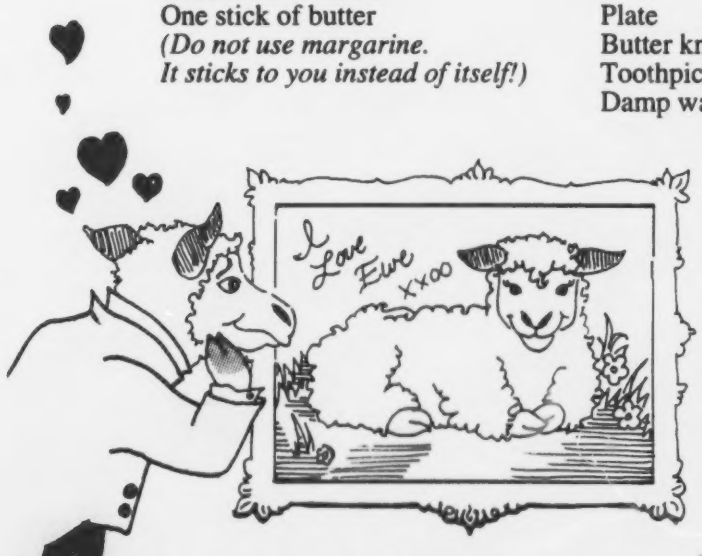
16

Make Your Own Butter Sculpture

Does anyone happen to have 500 pounds of butter? If so, you can make a butter sculpture the same size as Norma Duffield Lyon makes. If not, you could start with one stick of butter and a kitchen plate. Be sure to wash your hands before beginning.

What You'll Need

One stick of butter
(Do not use margarine. It sticks to you instead of itself!)
Plate
Butter knife
Toothpick
Damp wash cloth



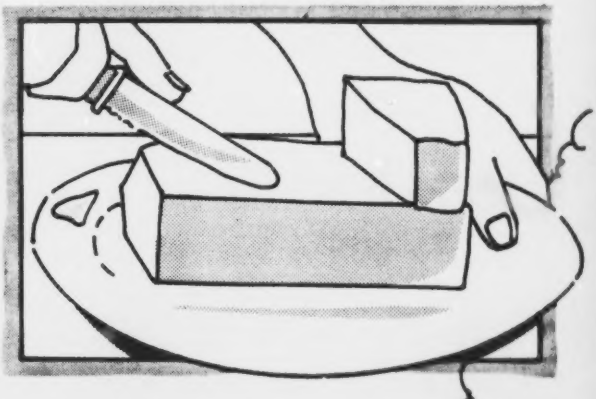
Directions

1. Decide what you want your butter sculpture to look like. You may want to look at a picture, a pet, or a piece of fruit for reference.

2. Remove the stick of butter from the refrigerator and place it in the middle of the plate.

3. Use the butter knife to cut the stick of butter to form the main shape of your sculpture. Use the damp cloth to clean your fingers whenever they get too slippery.

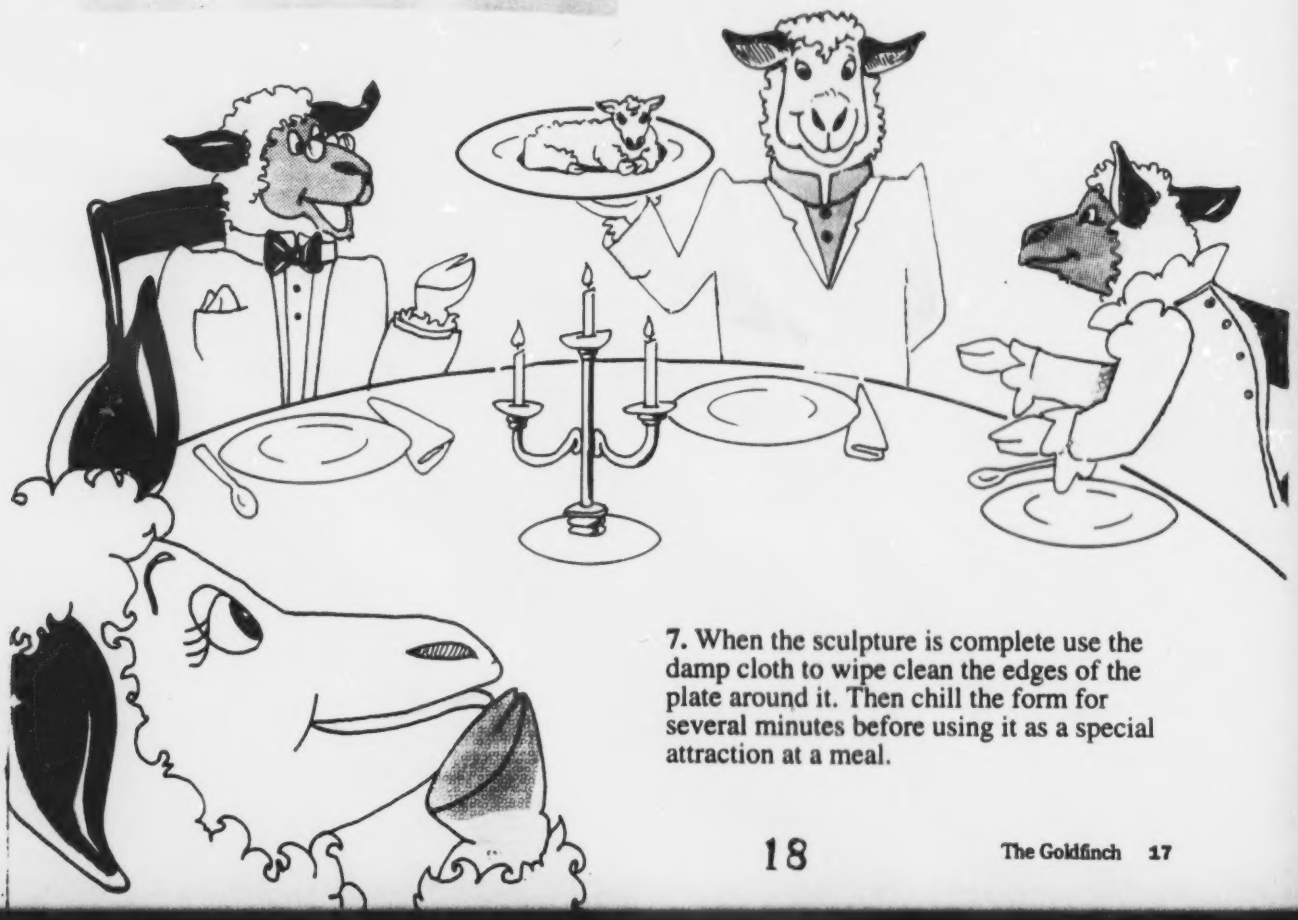
4. Start shaping the sculpture by rounding the edges of it with the butter knife, your fingers, or the toothpick. At the side of the plate save any bits of butter you may shave off while sculpting.



By Mary Moye-Rowley

5. Continue smoothing and shaping until the butter gets too soft. Then put the plate with your sculpture back in the refrigerator for five minutes.

6. When the butter is cool again, remove it from the refrigerator and continue sculpting. You can use the extra shavings of butter at the side of the plate for smaller details and the toothpick for carving.



7. When the sculpture is complete use the damp cloth to wipe clean the edges of the plate around it. Then chill the form for several minutes before using it as a special attraction at a meal.

State Fair Sleepovers

It's hard to believe, but the modern day recreational vehicle (RV) is a lot like the wagons that transported people in the 1800s. The RV may be faster and a lot more comfortable than a rickety wagon, but both vehicles have brought thousands of people to and from the Iowa State Fair since it began in 1854.

Settling in for a State Fair sleepover in an almost brand new Youth Inn, 1948. ISHS

On the road to the fair, and once they arrived, people would stop their wagons on the side of the road or at the fair's campgrounds, and make camp for the night. Because they carried cooking materials and food supplies with them, they would often cook their dinners over an open fire. Later in the evening, they might sit around the fire or on the wagon step, telling stories and enjoying the starry sky. For those whose transportation didn't double as sleeping quarters, tents and cots were available for rent at the fair campgrounds until the 1940s. This area became known as "Tent City."

As people's needs became more sophisticated, families began to travel to the fair in trailers. The trailers were parked on concrete platforms at the campgrounds. Soon Iowans wanted electricity and air conditioning to make their visits more comfortable.

Today, many fairgoers hitch their RVs up to one of 1,300 electric hookup sites at the fair's 160-acre campgrounds. Hundreds of other campers "rough it," pitching tents and sleeping on cots or in sleeping bags with very little between them and the great outdoors.

For the less adventurous, the campground has many modern conveniences unknown to the first fairgoers — showers, electricity, and RV waste disposal areas. Many families have camped at the fairgrounds for years (some even for generations).

Some livestock owners have been known to turn in at night with their animals in the fair's barns, curling up on cots in their pens. This has been discouraged

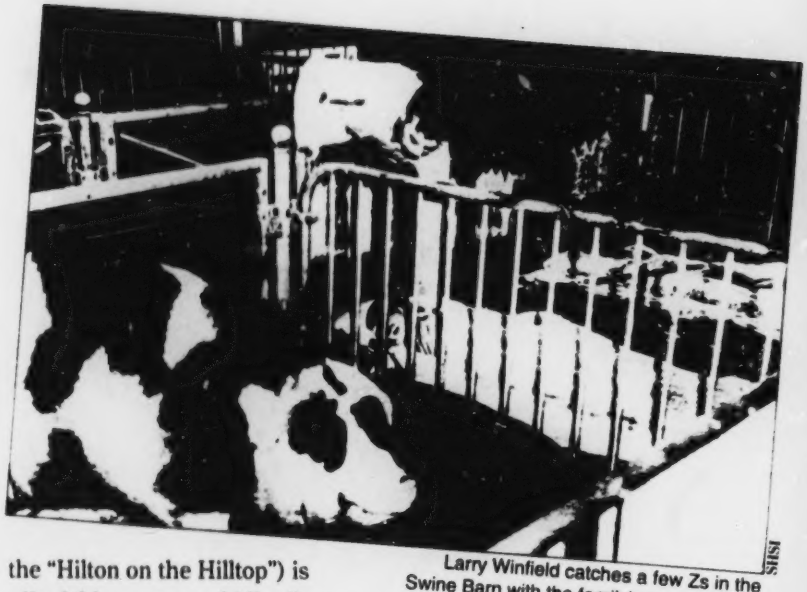
by the fair in the last few years. However, it's not uncommon to catch a glimpse of someone napping on a cot next to an animal in one of the livestock barns.

At the first fair in 1854, so many fairgoers swarmed into the city of Fairfield, that hotel rooms and boarding houses were quickly filled to capacity. Fairfield's residents came to the rescue and opened their homes to those who had come so far, but had no place to stay.

Youngsters had a similar problem for a long time. Future Farmers of America (FFA) and 4-H kids would travel long distances to enter their livestock and other goods in the fair, but often couldn't find decent places to stay.

Today, many of these kids and their chaperones stay at the Youth Inn. When construction was completed in 1942, Iowa kids got their very own building with two dormitories (one for girls and one for boys), an auditorium for youth exhibits, and a dining hall. Kids and young adults from around Iowa occupy the 355 metal bunk beds each year under the watchful eye of 15 teenage staff members and two house parents. And at $3 a night, the Youth Inn (nicknamed the "Hilton on the Hilltop") is affordable even on a kid's allowance! If you ever get the chance to stay at the Youth Inn, whatever you do, don't sneak out. You'll get stuck with bathroom duty.

—Amy Ruth



Larry Winfield catches a few Zs in the Swine Barn with the family's prize-winning hogs, 1957.

A family relaxes at their home away from home — the State Fair campgrounds in Des Moines, 1962.

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Phillip Duffield Stong
(1899-1957)

Phillip Duffield Stong, a successful writer and fourth-generation Iowan, was born in Keosauqua in 1899. He grew up on the family farm in southeast Iowa, a typical farm boy who enjoyed playing on the farm and listening to his grandfather's tales of adventure.

Later in his life Stong used many first-hand experiences—raising farm animals and visiting the circus—as material for his stories.

He graduated from Drake University in Des Moines in 1919 and worked as a teacher and journalist. He wrote often in his spare time, but it wasn't until 1932 that he became a successful novelist.

It was this year that Stong published State Fair, a story of an Iowa farm family's annual trip to the Iowa State Fair. He became a nationally-known writer almost overnight.

State Fair was made into three movies, including a musical movie in 1944.

In 1953, Stong wrote Return in August, a sequel to his best-selling State Fair. He wrote more than 40 books, novels, and stories, including 16 books for kids.

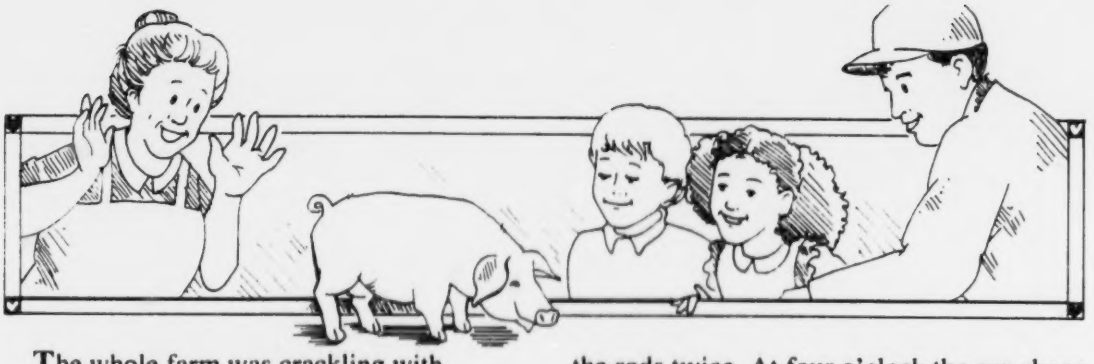
In 1934, Stong moved to Connecticut where he lived with his wife until his death in 1957. His birthplace, two miles west of Keosauqua, still stands as a private residence.

In Phillip Stong's State Fair, the Frakes, parents Abel and Melissa, and teenagers Wayne and Margy, make their annual week-long trip to the Iowa State Fair. The Frakes are farmers and spend much of the year preparing for the next fair. They have baked goods and preserves to make and animals to raise, all to be entered in the Fair's contests.

This year Melissa Frake will enter her pickles in the Fair for the first time, and Abel Frake hopes his prize hog, Blue Boy, will win the blue ribbon for best boar.

Like many fair-goers in the 1930s, the Frakes must drive a long distance to get to Des Moines. Once they arrive, they spend the entire week at the Fair, living out of a tent at the campgrounds.

In the following excerpt, the family's journey is temporarily delayed.



Art by Mary Moye-Rowley

The whole farm was crackling with preparation. The Hired Man had not **marcelled** Blue Boy, but only because the curl of the hair was not a judging point. He had manicured him . . . and Blue Boy's coat was **curried** and rubbed to [glossy] perfection. Blue Boy's tail was curled so tightly that its tension would have alarmed uninformed persons. Blue Boy . . . was the finest creature of his species that had ever existed in time and space.

Sunday passed quietly. Mrs. Frake had managed things so well that there was really nothing much to do on the day of departure. Late in the morning the Storekeeper drove over with the last of the supplies which the family would need for Fair Week. While the family leaned on the fence he sat in his little Ford truck and talked.

"I wouldn't depend on this fine weather. If you'd get off right away you'd be sure to get to Ottumwa before it begins to rain. . . ."

Abel looked at the skies, familiarly. "I'd say it was going to be good weather. A little bit hot but clear."

"You see?" said the Storekeeper triumphantly. "That's what I'd say to myself. Bet a cigar there'll be a thunder-storm yet this afternoon."

At noon the rain began and by three o'clock the family had heard lightening hit the rods twice. At four o'clock the sun shone brightly. Blue Boy could not start until sunset at any rate, for he must not suffer and sweat in the heat.

The family waited beside the truck. Slowly the sun moved down until its heat was [lessened]. Mrs. Frake served the family with sandwiches from the first of three lunch kits she had prepared. There was hot coffee from the kitchen stove, there were some of her own cucumber, green tomato and onion pickles — the jars dotted with cloves, mace, whole black pepper and bay leaf.

A little later the sun had definitely set and Abel went around the house trying the doors and windows. The sky was rich with sunset. There was a warm light over everything. . . . The family settled itself into the truck — Abel, his wife, Margy in the big front seat; Wayne back on the folded tent and the bedding near the boar.

They looked back at the house and Abel tramped on the starter. The motor burst into an even grumble and Abel turned around the carriage-yard case carefully. The Hired Man, his wife and his three children were lined up by the side of the driveway. As the truck turned its nose into the face of the disappearing sun they suddenly burst into frenzied shouts and wavings of the arms.

"Hooray! Hooray!" they shouted.

marcell: to make a deep soft wave or series of waves with a curling iron.

curried: combed/brushed and made presentable

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Once the family arrives at the Fair, each member goes his or her own way, but the family usually gathers for meals. On the third day of the Fair, over breakfast in the campgrounds, the Frakes discuss Blue Boy's chances of winning

"Tomorrow," Abel said solemnly, "They judge Blue Boy."

"Dad," said Wayne, "what do you think?"

Abel looked at his son confidently and kindly. "Don't worry, Wayne. The beast will win. I've talked to people all around the Stock Pavilion and they say nobody's ever seen such a hog in all the years they've been here."

"Do you think he'll win, Abel? Do you really think he'll win?"

They all looked at Mrs. Frake. It was evident that her desire that Blue Boy should win reached out beyond their own simple impulses. "I've been to the State Fair all these years, but I've never seen many of the family entries win a sweepstake. You really do think he will win, don't you Abel? You're not pretending?"

Abel chuckled. "I know why you want Blue Boy to win, Melissa. You think if Blue Boy wins I'll be fairly fit to live with for a whole year."

. . . Melissa Frake looked a long way beyond the breakfast-table. Then she smiled at Abel. "It would be pretty tiresome listening to you talk about when Blue Boy won his sweepstakes for the next fifty years, Abel."

He kissed her on the cheek, fondly. "Don't worry, Melissa."

He looked up at the children. "What'd you two do all day yesterday? What are you planning for to-day? Coming down to-morrow to see Blue Boy win?"

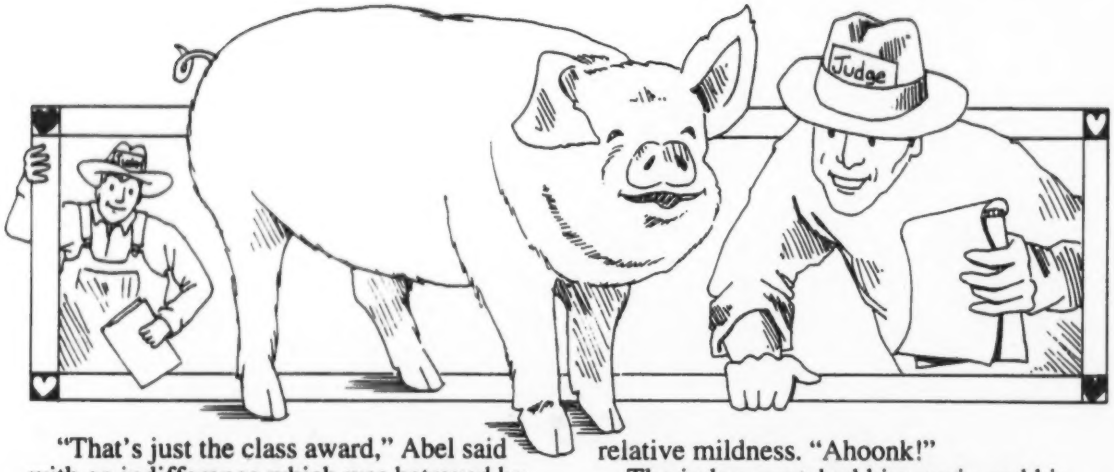
Wayne spoke first. "Of course, we are, Dad. Don't you think we're interested in Blue Boy? We'll be out there, don't you worry."

Abel patted his son on the shoulder. "I know you're interested. It's just a contest, of course, like running a furlong, or seeing who can roll a peanut the fastest with his nose. There's no difference at the bottom as far as patience and practice and work is concerned. But the one reason I want to win is that all of you have understood the patience and work it's taken to bring up a critter like Blue Boy. Well, tomorrow's the day."

The next afternoon the Frakes gather at the Stock Pavilion for the judging. It's hard to tell who's more nervous, Blue Boy or Abel!

. . . Blue Boy for four days had grown rapidly more conscious that he was a hog. Each morning he spent . . . ten minutes in touring his cage; then he took up his post with his snout against the wires, pointed at Esmeralda, [who occupied a nearby cage]. The powerful hind hocks which would one day ornament a jar filled with white vinegar and bay leaf, touch the floor only with a foremost crescent. Blue Boy was great enough to assume this attitude; he was too great to change it.

"But Dad," cried Margy, with excitement, "Blue Boy's already won! See, they've pinned a blue ribbon on his cage!"



"That's just the class award," Abel said with an indifference which was betrayed by the trembling of his voice. "Best Hampshire boar. They're looking 'em all over now to find the most physically perfect boar — all classes, sweepstakes winner. Ought to come pretty soon now. They don't have near so many entries to judge."

"Where are the judges?"

"They're in the next wing. That's a pretty good animal — no, here they come."

The judges paused at a crate up the line. They discussed a black-and-white animal with considerable animation, taking plentiful notes. Then they bore down directly on Blue Boy.

. . . They looked at Blue Boy from all angles, moving around and around the cage and checking up on each other's notes in low voices. Blue Boy was bored, disdainful and annoyed. One of the judges reached into the pen and scratched the boar's back. Blue Boy voiced his resentment in no unmistakable, though rather indolent, terms.

"Poise," said the judge, and laughed.

Blue Boy looked at the judge closely and then shifted his glance significantly to the cage opposite. "Ahoonk," he suggested, with relative mildness. "Ahoonk!"

The judge scratched him again and his attitude became ever more tense.

. . . "Aren't they going to give it to him?" asked Margy, in a repressed tone, when the judges were quite out of earshot.

"Of course they're going to give it to him. But they have to look at all the rest — just as a matter of form." Abel was nervous. Blue Boy uttered an asthmatic wish for his mudhole.

. . . The judges passed on, comparing notes.

At four thirty o'clock, when the family was at a breaking tension and Abel had become almost ill-natured, the judges returned to Blue Boy's crate and chalked "I" in a large figure on the corner of the crate.

"Most remarkable boar I've seen in twelve years of judging and thirty-five with hogs," said [one of the judges]. The others congratulated Abel and added their assurances that Blue Boy was an unparalleled animal.

. . . When they had gone, "Oh my Lord," said Abel. "I own the finest hog that ever was."

—Excerpted by Amy Ruth

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Announcing the

"Capture the Magic" Iowa State Fair Writing Contest for Kids

Sponsored by the
Iowa State Fair Blue Ribbon Foundation
and
The Goldfinch Magazine/State Historical Society of Iowa

Contact Person: Beth Reinig, 515/245-3730

PURPOSE
To bring generations of Iowans together through the common bond of the Iowa State Fair.

THEME
"Capture the Magic" of the Iowa State Fair through the generations. As a proud Iowa tradition of families and fun, the Iowa State Fair is seeking memories of the Fair from our preceeding generations.

Calling all fifth graders to conduct oral interviews (see box for more information on how to do this) with an older member of your family or community. Ask your interviewee what he/she remembers about the Iowa State Fair. Don't forget to include the sights and sounds as well as the events. Take notes on your interview and write an essay about what you learned.

ENTRY CATEGORIES
Every fifth grader in Iowa may enter the contest by submitting an essay to their teacher. Teachers should select the best entry form from each classroom to enter in the state contest. Only one finalist may be submitted from each classroom for entry into the contest. But, the Foundation requests all entries be forwarded. A teacher with five different classrooms may submit five different essays. Each student may submit only <u>one</u> essay for consideration.

ENTRY FORMAT
1. Each essay should be no more than 500 words long.
2. Submit an original and three copies of the winning classroom entry.

Iowa State Fair

A whirl of rides, the glow of lights, and a buzz of people make the Iowa State Fair a magical place.

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3. Attach a completed entry form to each winning enty (call or write the Iowa State Fair Blue Ribbon Foundation for an entry form).
4. Type or print in black ink on 8 1/2 x 11 white paper.

SEND TO
"Capture the Magic," Iowa State Fair Blue Ribbon Foundation, 601 Locust, Suite 900, Des Moines, IA 50309

DEADLINE
Essays must be postmarked no later than May 1, 1994.

CRITERIA FOR JUDGING
- Use of sights and sounds as well as a summary of events
- Level of interest and historical value
- Effective use of oral history format
- Correct punctuation, spelling, grammar, and neatness

JUDGING
Winning essays will be chosen by a panel of Foundation Board members.

PRIZES
- Prizes will be awarded to the top three entries and their teachers.
- The first place winner will receive a one-day admission pass to the 1994 Iowa State Fair for his/her immediate family as well as additional coupons for rides and entertainment. The first place winner will also be honored by Governor Terry E. Branstad at a special awards ceremony.
- Second and third place winners will receive individual passes to the 1994 Iowa State Fair as well as coupons for rides and entertainment.
- All finalists and their teachers will receive a free one-year subscription to *The Goldfinch* Magazine.
- All finalists will also receive a certificate of participation signed by Governor Branstad and a "Treasure Our Fair" pin.
- The instructor of the second and third place winning entries will receive various Foundation gifts.
- Winners, their hometown media, and the *Des Moines Register,* will be notified by June 1.

Do An Oral History

To conduct your own oral history, follow the nine steps below.

● Read about the Iowa State Fair before the interview. Remember magazines and books can tell you what happened, but only a person can tell you how it felt.

● Use a tape recorder. If you don't own one, check out a tape recorder from your local library. You can listen to your narrator better if you use a tape recorder.Use a fresh tape, check the batteries, and be sure the microphone works. Get permission from the narrator to use a tape recorder before you begin.

● Interview one person at a time. It's hard to tell who is speaking if more than two people are recorded at a time.

● Eliminate extra noise. Noise distracts people, and your microphone hears noise, too. Be sure your voice still can be heard on tape.

● Explain why you are collecting memories. Tell your narrator other people will hear the tape. Let them know they may refuse to answer any question, and, for the parts of the interview the narrator wants to share with you alone, turn off the recorder. Offer to play the completed tape for the narrator.

● Get background information. Begin with something like, "I'm Sharon Smith. I am recording an oral history interview with my grandma. What is your name, Grandma?" Let Grandma say her name and ask her to spell it. Include when and where the interview is taking place. Begin with simple questions such as age, date of birth, place of birth, and educational background.

● Ask questions that give you information rather than "yes" or "no" responses. Before the interview write down questions that begin with who, what, when, where, why, and how. Responses to question such as "How did winning a blue ribbon make you feel?" and "Why did you go to the fair?" give you more information about your narrator than "yes" and "no" answers.

● Ask for more explanation if you are confused. If you don't understand your narrator, others won't either. When you have finished with a topic, ask "Is there anything you want to add?" Oral historians use this question because quite often the narrator thought of a story but didn't mention it.

● Thank the narrator. He or she has shared with you personal memories—memories that will help you understand the past.

—Sherri Dagel

Treasure Our Fair

Over the years, millions of people have attended Iowa's State Fair. Yet, despite its popularity, the 400-acre fairgrounds faces devastating deterioration. Iowa's harsh winters (the freezing-and-thawing cycles) have taken their toll on the buildings. Long-delayed structural repairs and critical maintenance is needed. Damage to the various buildings is so bad that an estimated $30 million is needed to restore them. The 1911 Varied Industries Building's concrete floor is being torn apart because of a collapsed drainage system underneath. The 1904 Agriculture Building's roof is leaking, causing major damage to the interior floors and walls. The 1907 Swine Barn's brick supports need repair or this huge barn will have to be shut down. These are only a few of the buildings that need help.

The Fairground buildings are so architecturally important that they have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. But they need the help of Iowans so that future generations will enjoy this state treasure. For information on how you can help, contact the Iowa State Fair Blue Ribbon Foundation, Two Ruan Center, Suite 900, Des Moines, Iowa 50309.

Name That Building

Walk into one of the Iowa State Fairgrounds buildings and see ("whoomp. . . there it is"), smell ("PEE-yoo"), and hear ("Moo!" "Cluck" "Oink!") what's happening inside. Hold on to your Levi's.

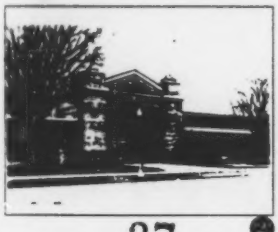
The Goldfinch **takes you on a "tour" of the buildings without actually driving, walking, or inline skating there. See if you can match the name of each building with its drawing by reading the clues below. Write the name of the building on the blank below each drawing.**

Answers on page 30.

Iowa State Fairgrounds Buildings

Pioneer Hall
Varied Industries
Pavilion
Grandstand
Agriculture Building
Cattle Barn
Swine Barn
Youth Inn

1



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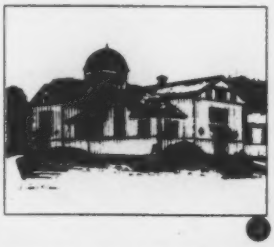

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Artwork by William H. McNarney for the Iowa State Fair Blue Ribbon Foundation © 1993

1. Lots o' people (at least 12,000) watch shows here.

Built in 1909, this building has seen everything from truck/tractor pulls to Beach Boys concerts.

Name this building: _____

2. You could nickname this building "lotta businesses."

Built in 1911, it was originally called Machinery Hall. Now you can walk on the concrete floor and receive freebies from folks in stalls.

Name this building: _____

3. Built in 1886, it's the first permanent building built on the fairgrounds. High on a hill, you can't miss its large red cupola.

Made of wood, this building was named after the first European-Americans to come to Iowa. It holds old-time exhibits and antique shows.

Name this building: _____

4. Its roof is shaped like the top of a snow globe.

Prize-winning animals are shown on its sawdust-covered floor.

Built in 1902, this building seats over 3,000 people and is one of the few buildings on the fairgrounds that can be heated.

Name this building: _____

5. Gardeners, farmers, and bakers show their best fruits, vegetables, and baked goods in this building.

Built in 1904, the design of this building was influenced by the 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago (a BIG-DEAL fair at the time).

Name this building: _____

6. Oink! Oink!

Built in 1907, this brick building has 1,100 permanent pens for the little oinkers and two show-rings.

Alterations were made to the building in 1936 and 1942.

Name this building: _____

7. Moo! Moo!

Up to 2,000 heads (and bodies) of livestock can stay comfortably in three acres of stalls.

Built in 1909, with additions in 1914 and 1920, the building also includes a show-ring and a multi-media center.

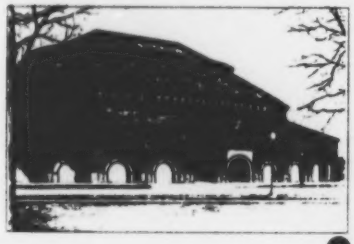
Name this building: _____

8. No adults allowed! Kids only!

Built in 1939, this building houses young people who stay and take part in fair activities.

More than 1,000 stay each year during the fair. The building houses beds, showers, a kitchen, and a mega lunchroom.

Name this building: _____



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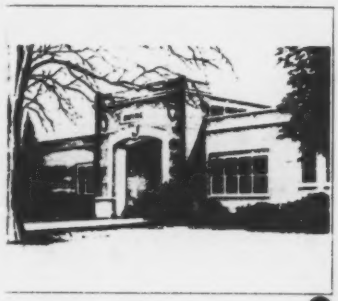

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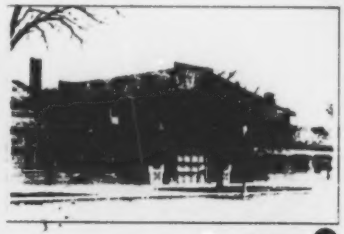


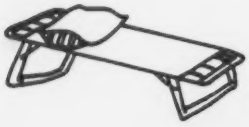
4

5

Fair SIGHTS

These drawings may remind you of things you would see at a fair (or read about in this issue of THE GOLDFINCH). Fill in the blanks. (Answers on page 30.)

Example:

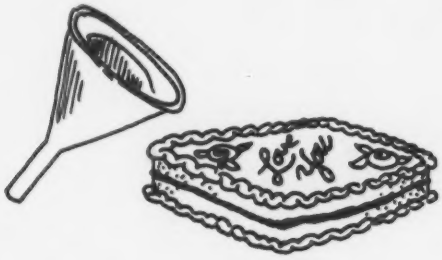


10

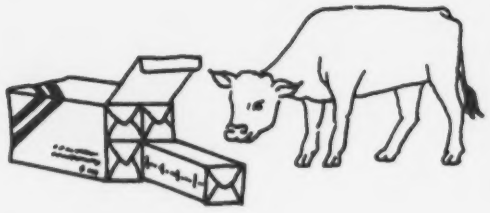
1. Answer: cotton candy

2. _____

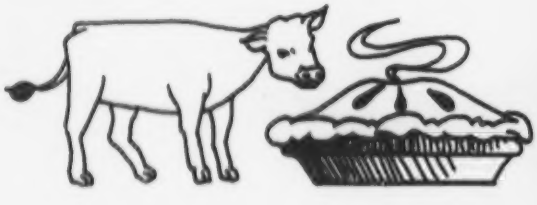
3. _____



4. _____



5. _____



6. _____

Art by Mary Moye-Rowley

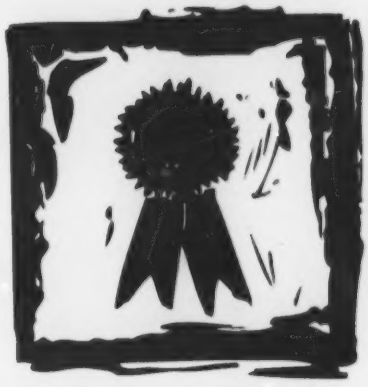
History Makers *Doing Their Fair Share*

To many students at Stowe Elementary School in Des Moines, the State Fairgrounds has always been a special place for fun, friends, and memories. A group of fifth graders in Homeroom 306 wanted to make sure these memories would be around for years to come.

Located a few blocks from the fairgrounds, Stowe has a special bond with the Fair and its workers. A city-wide program called "Partners in Progress" matches elementary schools with local businesses and felt Stowe and the State Fair staff would be a perfect match. Through the program, schools and businesses exchange letters, go on field trips, and support each other.

Avon Crawford, Homeroom 306's teacher, read a newspaper article to her students describing a large contribution that a local business promised the fair for its $30 million building restoration (*see page 26*). The students wanted to do something, too. With the help of their teacher, students began a campaign to raise money for the Fair restoration.

Students chose to make autograph books with the school's motto: "Stowe Eagles" on the cover. Their campaign began with a few weeks of production and a limited supply to sell. Much to the students' surprise, 160 books sold

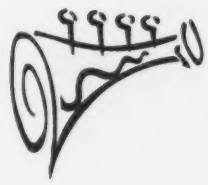


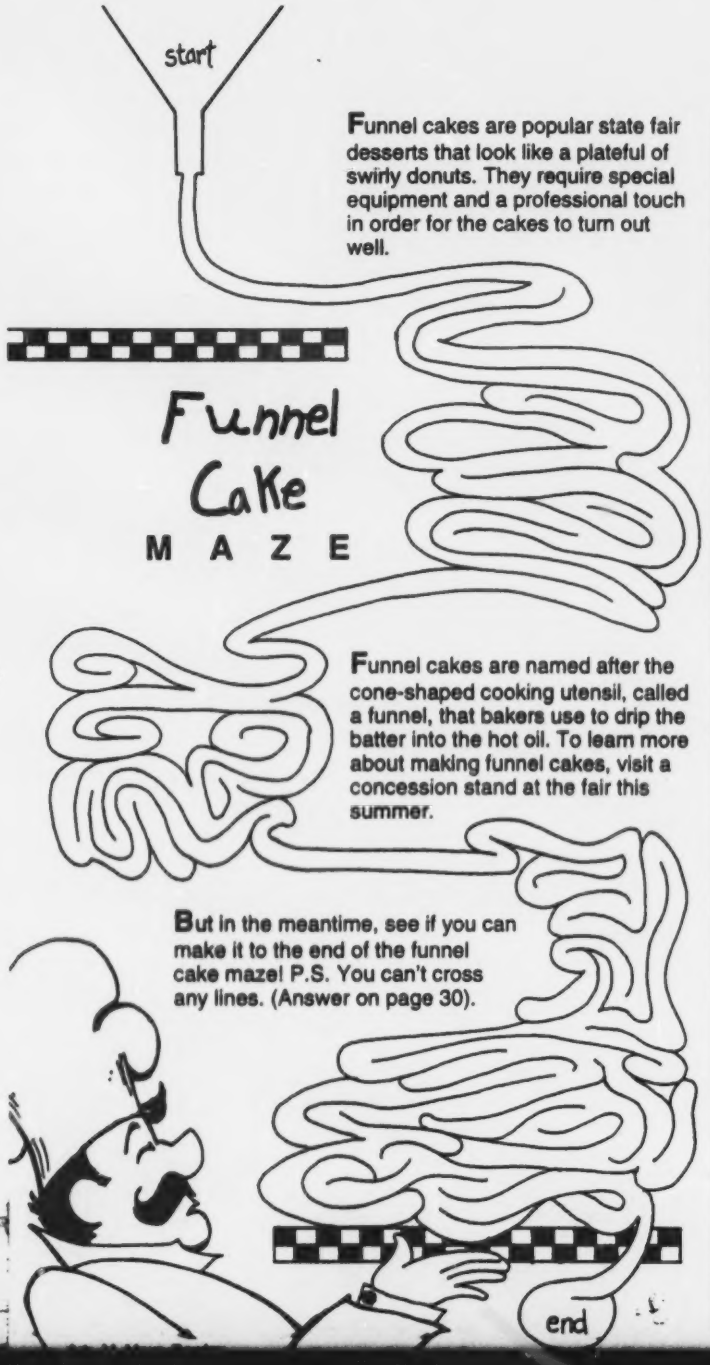
out in minutes on the first day! After four days, they had sold 512 autograph books at 25 cents each and raised $128 for Fair restoration.

Once the money was raised, the fifth graders presented a humungous (in size) check to the Blue Ribbon Foundation. Marion Lucas, manager of the State Fair, received the $128 check at the annual school picnic held at the fairgrounds. As a result of their great success, Lucas let the students decide where the money would go. The students selected the Administration Building.

Currently, plans are in the works for this year's fundraising project. Several students at Stowe are ready to make the autograph books and feel confident of even greater success. The students realize that the restoration of the fairgrounds is an all-state project, and they want to do their part. Fifth-grader Kim Huffman thinks it will be "really cool to be a part of the Fair" and is excited to help out a state treasure.

—Jennifer Langill





Funnel cakes are popular state fair desserts that look like a plateful of swirly donuts. They require special equipment and a professional touch in order for the cakes to turn out well.

Funnel cakes are named after the cone-shaped cooking utensil, called a funnel, that bakers use to drip the batter into the hot oil. To learn more about making funnel cakes, visit a concession stand at the fair this summer.

But in the meantime, see if you can make it to the end of the funnel cake maze! P.S. You can't cross any lines. (Answer on page 30).

ANSWERS

Page 26 (Name That Building):

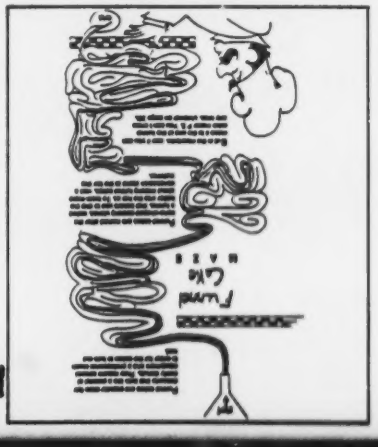
1. Grandstand
2. Varied Industries
3. Pioneer Hall
4. Pavilion
5. Agriculture Building
6. Swine Barn
7. Cattle Barn
8. Youth Inn

Page 28 (Fair Sights)

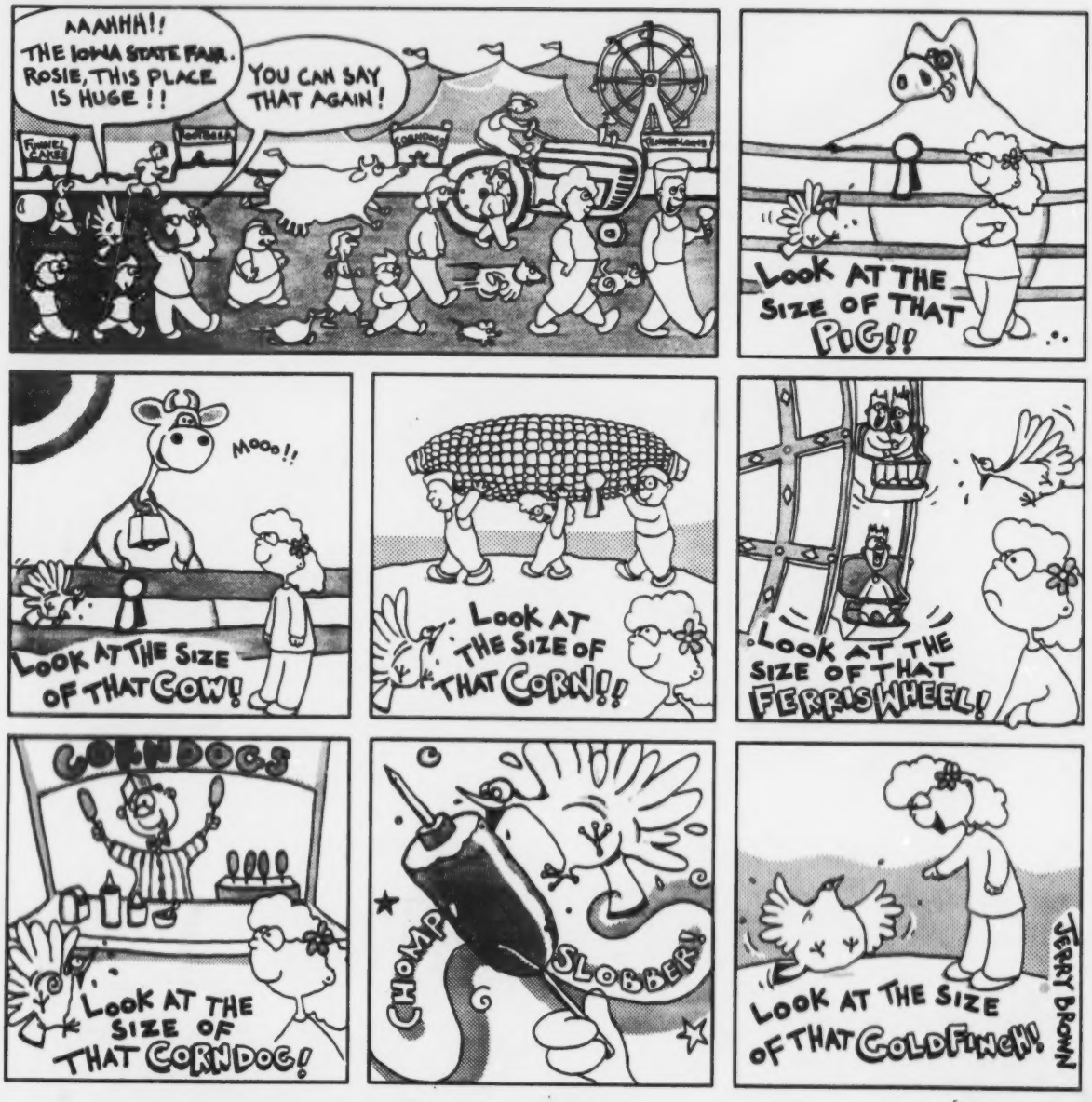
2. Corndog
3. Watermelon
4. Funnel Cake
5. Butter Cow
6. Cow Pie

Page 30 (Funnel Cake Maze)

Turn upside down for correct path!



The Roost


AAHHH!! THE IOWA STATE FAIR. ROSIE, THIS PLACE IS HUGE!!
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN!
FUNNEL CAKES
LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THAT PIG!!
MOOO!!
LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THAT COW!
LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THAT CORN!!
LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THAT FERRIS WHEEL!
CORNDOGS
LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THAT CORNDOG!
CHOMP
SLOBBER!
LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THAT GOLDFINCH!
JERRY BROWN

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The Goldfinch

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